



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road  
Groton, CT 06340-4394  
Town Clerk (860)441-6640  
Town Manager  
(860)441-6630

## Meeting Minutes

### Representative Town Meeting

**Moderator Natalie B. Billing, Representatives Joe Baril, Tom Barnhart, Lori Bartinik, Alicia Bauer, Genevieve Cerf, Michael Collins, Syma Ebbin, Peter Fairbank, Robert Garcia, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Debra Jenkins, Carole McCarthy, Kevin McMahon, Richard Metayer, David Miner, Deborah Monteiro, James Moulding, Scott Newsome, Nora Patterson, Deborah Peruzzotti, Joy Plunket, Robert Post, Kevin Power, Don Pratt, Mary-Ellen Schefers, Eleanor Scussel, Jack Sebastian, Jennifer Smuts, Eleanor Steere, Fritz Stein, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Patti Thunberg, Cheryl Tilney, Kevin Trejo, Tom Vivirito, Robert Walker Sr, and John Wheeler.**

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**Wednesday, March 14, 2007**

**7:30 PM**

**Senior Center**

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#### Regular Meeting

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#### A. ROLL CALL

*Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.*

*32 members were present, and a quorum was declared.*

*The Town Clerk announced that Natalie Billing was elected by a District Seven Caucus held prior to this meeting to fill the vacancy in that district.*

*Members Present: Rep. Baril, Rep. Bartinik, Rep. Bauer, Moderator Billing, Rep. Collins, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. McMahon, Rep. Metayer, Rep. Miner, Rep. Monteiro, Rep. Moulding, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Patterson, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Power, Rep. Pratt, Rep. Schefers, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steere, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Thunberg, Rep. Tilney, Rep. Trejo, Rep. Vivirito and Rep. Wheeler, Jr.*

*Members Absent: Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Jenkins, Rep. Plunket, Rep. Post, Rep. Scussel, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Stein and Rep. Walker, Sr.*

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.*

#### B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

*The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag.*

#### C. ELECTION OF MODERATOR

*The Town Clerk opened the floor to nominations for Moderator.*

*Rep. Billing was nominated by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Miner.*

*Rep. Vivirito was nominated by Rep. Power, seconded by Rep. Bartinik.*

*There being no further nominations, the Town Clerk declared nominations closed.*

*The vote for the office of Moderator was 19 for Rep. Billing, 13 for Rep. Vivirito. (Voting for Rep.*

*Billing were Reps. Baril, Bauer, Billing, Collins, Ebbin, Fairbank, Garcia, Granatosky, Harrell, McCarthy, McMahon, Metayer, Miner, Patterson, Pratt, Schefers, Svencer, Tilney, Wheeler.*

*Voting for Rep. Vivirito were Reps. Bartinik, Monteiro, Moulding, Newsome, Peruzzotti, Power, Smuts, Steere, Steinfeld, Streeter, Thunberg, Trejo, Vivirito.)*

*A brief recess was taken to allow the Moderator to review the current business before the RTM.*

*The meeting resumed at 7:42 p.m.*

*Moderator Natalie Billing presented Councilor Rita Schmidt with a plaque for her service as Moderator and Representative on the RTM.*

*Ms. Schmidt thanked all the members for their support during her tenure with the RTM.*

#### D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2007

*A motion that the minutes be adopted was made by Rep. Trejo, seconded by Rep. Bauer.*

*Rep. Moulding, Rep. Trejo and Rep. Sebastian requested amendments to the minutes.*

*The vote to accept the minutes as amended carried 31 in favor, 1 abstention. (Abstaining: Rep. Fairbank)*

#### **E. CITIZENS' PETITIONS**

*Kathleen Socha, 36 Center Street, Noank, read a letter that had been mailed to the Town Council and Representatives. The letter provided specific information about the Groton Animal Foundation's mission, officers and contact information.*

*Wendy Eckholm, 165 Benham Road, asked the members to view The Day's slide show online titled "A Love of Animals." She reviewed key elements from the slide show. She pointed out the fact that towns fail to upgrade and maintain facilities that are now "Grandfathered". She asked the entire community of Groton to work collectively to support and rebuild the Groton Animal Control Facility.*

#### **F. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS**

*The Moderator informed the members that Rep. Post was hospitalized and is now recuperating at home. A card was sent from the RTM on February 9, 2007. She reported that Rep. Scussel is on vacation and Rep. Sebastian is out of town.*

*Moderator Billing announced that a copy of an Ordinance providing for an enhanced tax abatement on housing units owned by Mystic River Homes Inc was mailed to all RTM members on February 21, 2007 for information only. The Moderator instructed the members that if the Council approves the Ordinance, the only appropriate action of the RTM would be a motion to veto. She announced that an e-mail was received from Edward R. Johnson concerning the Board of Education budget and is available to any member upon request.*

*Rep. Steere left at this point in the meeting.*

#### **2006-0236 Acceptance of Open Space at East Farm Subdivision**

**This matter was Referred to the RTM Community & Economic Development Committee, due back on April 11, 2007. The motion carried.**

#### **G. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:**

##### **1. Financial report**

*Mr. Vincent reported that the Unreserved & Undesignated Fund balance as of July 1, 2006 is approximately \$9.2 million; the General Contingency balance is \$325,000 due to the transfer of \$25,000 approved for the preliminary design work on the animal shelter; the Capital Reserve balance is \$2,902,213. Mr. Vincent stated that the increase is mainly due to interest.*

*Mr. Vincent highlighted the Public Works Solid Waste Plans and Challenges article and the January Public Works Monthly Management Report that appears in the Town Manager's News distributed at this meeting.*

*Mr. Vincent provided a brief explanation of the process of setting a mill rate after deliberations by the Council and RTM have been completed.*

*He stated that municipalities are trying to maintain the revenue from the increased local conveyance tax which was passed in 2003 and is due to expire in June, 2007.*

*Mr. Vincent mentioned that the Governor's proposed budget contains changes in the revenue distribution of the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan funds that would affect Southeastern Connecticut towns.*

*Reps. McMahon, Garcia and Schefers left at this point in the meeting.*

##### **2. Monthly briefing**

*The Manager reviewed the narrative and table concerning the revaluation contained in the Town Manager's news. He stated that the new revaluation results are similar to the previous year's results. He volunteered to arrange a special presentation from the Assessor at a future meeting if the RTM would like one.*

*Mr. Oefinger announced that members may pick up the Budget Book, CIP, and outside agencies*

*budgets this evening. He noted that the Board of Education Budget is available on-line and that books should be available next week.*

*He provided an update on the current status of the three school construction projects.*

*The Manager noted that the Fourth Annual Irish Downtown Mystic Parade will be held on March 25th. He mentioned that the Tercentennial Committee is working on a "Spring Fling Ball-Silent Auction" to benefit the Tercentennial Legacy Playground to be held at the Mystic Marriott on April 21.*

*Mr. Oefinger proudly announced that the Town has been recognized for the twelfth consecutive year as a Tree City Community.*

*Mr. Vincent noted that all approvals have been received for the Water Pollution Control Facility Upgrade Project and work should commence around April 9, 2007.*

*Mr. Vincent announced that a ceremony to celebrate the "topping off and beam raising" will be held at the Fitch High School construction site on April 12, 2007.*

*Rep. Trejo expressed concern about the current redistricting plan. He asked if there is a contingency plan in place if school construction is not completed by the scheduled opening of the schools on September 10, 2007.*

*Moderator Billing offered to get a response for him and report back to the RTM.*

*Rep. Steinford stated that the contractor still has five more months.*

*The Moderator announced that the Town Council's public hearing on the budget is scheduled for March 26 and their tentative review process begins on March 31 and finishes on April 10, 2007.*

## **H. LIAISON REPORTS**

### **1. Town Council - Rep. Monteiro**

*Rep. Monteiro provided a short review of the Town Council's actions for February and March. She stated that two RTM representatives are still needed to serve on the Flanders Road Utility Extension Committee.*

### **2. Economic Development Commission - Rep. Cerf**

*No report.*

### **3. Town Council/Board of Education/RTM Liaison Committee - Rep. Patterson**

*No report.*

### **4. Permanent School Building Committee - Rep. Miner**

*Rep. Miner reported on the progress at the three school construction projects. He noted that the completion date for Fitch High School has been changed to February 18, 2008 which is earlier than previously estimated. Rep. Miner reported that Gilbane Building Company sets a high priority on worker safety and that a small celebration will be held for the crew to highlight the importance of maintaining a safe work site.*

### **5. P.B.F.D. Consolidation Review Committee - Reps. Baril & Steinford**

*No report.*

### **6. Shellfish Task Force - Rep. Ebbin**

*Rep. Ebbin attended two meetings of the Task Force on January 22, and February 26, 2007. She mentioned that the dedication ceremony for the Noank Hatchery was well-attended. She reported on the status of the South Road discharge study being conducted by Ledge Light Health District. She stated that Sydney vanZandt pointed out that the Task force has identified a similar situation at the Tanglewood subdivision on Seneca Road involving 12 houses that are not hooked up to sewers. The District feels that there is sufficient interest to evaluate and address this situation.*

*The Task Force discussed on the following: the effects of upland development as it affects water quality in the reservoir and Poquonnock River; the extension of the no-mow zone by the end-fall of the water utility plant; the recent Planning Commission's denial of the Super Wal-Mart site plan application; the establishment of a six mph speed limit for the Mystic River; possible installation of a dog waste collection system at Haley Farm.*

*The Moderator asked for volunteers to serve as liaison on the Flanders Road Utility Extension Committee and the Phase II School Design Committee. Reps. Bauer and Wheeler volunteered for the Flanders Road Utility Extension Committee.*

*The Town Manager remarked that he envisions that the work for the Phase II School Design Committee should be completed in several months. He does not anticipate it to be arduous or lengthy to review the master plan. Reps. Smuts and Harrell volunteered.*

**I. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**1. FINANCE**

**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Granatosky**

*No meeting, no report.*

**2. COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Vivirito**

*No meeting, no report.*

**3. EDUCATION**

**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Patterson**

*Chairman Patterson read the minutes of the January 27, January 30, and February 5 joint meetings of the Town Council/Board of Education in which several members of the RTM Education Committee attended. (Minutes are attached.)*

**4. HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES**

**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Wheeler**

*No meeting, no report.*

**5. RECREATION**

**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town- Chairman Power**

*No meeting, no report.*

**6. PUBLIC SAFETY**

**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Pratt**

*No meeting, no report.*

**7. PUBLIC WORKS**

**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Collins**

*No meeting, no report.*

**8. RULES & PROCEDURES**

**a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Stein**

*No meeting, no report.*

**J. OTHER BUSINESS**

*In response to Rep. Collins, the Town Manager confirmed that a tentative mill rate of 17.21 is projected based on the information contained in the draft of the Town Council FYE 2008 Budget Review Calendar.*

*The Moderator requested that the Floor Leaders and Chairpersons meet immediately after adjournment to discuss the scheduling of RTM budget sessions. She requested all members to review the tentative budget meeting dates and to report if they will be absent.*

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion to adjourn at 8:50 p.m. was made by Rep. Trejo, seconded by Rep. Harrell and so voted unanimously.*

*Attest:*

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk  
Clerk of the RTM*

*Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk*